

Message Text

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64

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 IO-10 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /111 W

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R 060235Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 18

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 2259

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SEATO

SUBJECT: THAI FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON SEATO

1. SUMMARY - IN AUGUST 5 SPEECH TO PRESS CLUB IN WELLINGTON THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI EMPHASIZED HIS GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE SEE SEATO BECOME LOW-KEY, LOW-PROFILE ORGANIZATION BUT STATED MANILA PACT RETAINED VALIDITY AND SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. HE SAID THREAT FROM THE NORTH HAD BEEN REMOVED BUT THAT SEATO PLAYED USEFUL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND SECURITY ROLE. HE ALSO SAID THAT AT SEPTEMBER NEW YORK MEETING OF SEATO RTG WOULD PROPOSE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS

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REORGANIZATION OF SEATO. END SUMMARY

2. SEATO WAS MAIN FOCUS OF CHATCHAI SPEECH AS HE NOTED TIMES HAVE CHANGED IN TWO DECADES SINCE SIGNING OF MANILA PACT. THREAT FROM NORTH HAD DISAPPEARED, RTG HAD NORMALIZED RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND RTG ACTIVELY SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT IN LAOS. ALSO, THAIS WERE ENCOURAGED BY DRV'S OPEN AND UNHURRIED APPROACH TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND BY CHOU EN LAI'S STATEMENT IN EARLY JULY THAT PRINCE SIHANOUK DESIRED NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THAILAND. RTG LOOKED FORWARD TO EARLY RETURN OF SIHANOUK TO CAMBODIA. WITH VIETNAM WAR OVER US TROOPS NO LONGER NEEDED IN THAILAND, EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON SEA DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION WITH A SPECIAL EFFORT TOWARD STRENGTHENING LAOS AND BURMA IN ORDER FOR THOSE COUNTRIES TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY.

3. THAILAND INTENDED TO REMAIN IN MANILA PACT BUT, WITH END OF WAR, TIME HAS COME TO CONVERT ORGANIZATION TO LOW-KEY, LOW-PROFILE OPERATION. EFFORTS OF ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE TOWARDECONOMIC-SOCIAL AND SECURITY (COUNTER-INSURGENCY) OBJECTIVES. CHATCHAI CITED DOCUMENTATION ON COMMUNISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AS IMPORTANT SEATO EFFORT. THAT SEATO HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE WAS DEMONSTRATED BY FACT THAT NOT ONE MEMBER COUNTRY HAD LOST ANY TERRITORY. IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION AS TO HOW SEATO MIGHT BE CHANGED CHATCHAI SAID RTG, AT SEPTEMBER SEATO MEETING IN NEW YORK WOULD PROPOSE MINISTERIAL LEVEL CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS REORGANIZATION.

4. (ACCORDING TO EARLIER NEWS REPORTS, CHATCHAI STATED ON DEPARTURE FOR VISITS TO NZ AND AUSTRALIA THAT: HE EXPECTED SEATO WILL HAVE BEEN PHASED OUT IN TWO OR THREE YEARS; HE UNDERSTANDS SEATO SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN TOLD TO LOOK FOR OTHER JOBS; HE WILL BE DISCUSSING TIMING OF PHASE-OUT WITH NZ AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS, AND HE EXPECTED THE MANILA PACT WOULD BE MAINTAINED.)

5. ON RELATED ISSUES CHATCHAI SAID PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN THAILAND WAS IN CONFLICT WITH KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION CALLING FOR SEA ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND UNCLASSIFIED

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NEUTRALITY. HE SAID THAILAND WELCOMES THE PRESENCE OF NEW ZEALAND FORCES ON THE MAINLAND OF ASIA UNDER FPDA, BUT RECOGNIZES THEIR PRESENCE AS TRANSITIONAL. HE SAID THAILAND DID NOT BELONG TO THE "DOMINO CLUB" WHICH WAS MADE UP ONLY OF FORMER FRENCH COLONIES IN THE REGION. HE NOTED THAT CSCE HAD CONFIRMED POST WW II REALITY IN EUROPE AND HOPED POST VIETNAM REALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WOULD ALSO SOON BE STABILIZED. UPCOMING ASEAN SUMMIT

SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THE DESIRE FOR TEN NATION (ASEAN, PLUS BURMA, CAMBODIA, LAOS AND TWO VIETNAMS) COOPERATION IN REGION. THAILAND WOULD WELCOME NEW ZEALAND IN ASEAN BUT ISSUE WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHER MEMBERS. CHATCHAI HAD "NOTHING TO SAY" WHEN ASKED IF RTG OPPOSED US MILITARY PRESENCE IN WESTERN PACIFIC ISLANDS.

6. COMMENT - PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON EXPECTED TO BE CHATCHAI'S ONLY MAJOR PUBLIC ADDRESS IN NEW ZEALAND. HE WILL BE MEETING WITH PM (AND FOREIGN MINISTER) ROWLING AND SENIOR GNZ OFFICIALS BEFORE BEGINNING SHORT VACATION IN SOUTHERN ALPS.
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